



October 26, 2022

To whom it may concern:

After careful review of the draft report We Will Chicago Plan by members of Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative (CAICC) we are reaching out to express some concerns and ask that revisions be made prior to finalizing and distributing the report. Not changing this report will perpetuate harm to our community.

We were delighted to see the acknowledgement of the Native American history and continued presence at the start of the report. The Native American community here in Chicago has been aggressively promoting the use of land acknowledgments and more importantly pushing for K-12 school curriculum changes. Too many of our civic leaders and citizens are unaware of the history that shaped Chicago and the continued presence of a vibrant and robust Native American community along with its many institutional support organizations and programs. We've been invisible or marginalized due to our community size – something caused by forced removal and the perpetuation of colonized narratives that have erased our past and continued presence in Chicago. With that said we also believe that the land acknowledgment is only a first step and that if there is commitment behind it - there needs to be a plan of action too. We were very disappointed that the sections Civic Engagement, Economics and Housing excluded any mention of the Native American community or data.

Native American communities are too often left out of reports when there appears to be lack of data. However due our unique political status and the special trust relationship we have as members of sovereign nations, the federal government or national Native American led organizations are the sources that need to be used. One such source is:

<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/NAHSG-UrbanStudy.html>. Another source that better describes the inadequate collection and availability of data using COVID as the focus is: <https://www.uihi.org/projects/data-genocide-of-american-indians-and-alaska-natives-in-covid-19-data/>.

Still today, many of the City's methods of collecting data perpetuate the inadequate outcomes when they don't even have a place Native Americans can check the box for identity. It is true that we do not have a lot of data about Native American people in Chicago specifically, however, there is quite a bit of data for example, from the Urban Indian Health Institute and health and social science research publications, that make very clear that Native people in urban communities consistently experience the disparities (health, education, economic, incarceration, etc) that also characterize the experiences of Black and Latino communities. Therefore, we suggest that any place in the report that mentions action



or focus to lift Black and Latino communities also needs to list Native American. Not doing so is a form of erasure. Grouping Native Americans with the Asian population does not make sense to us either. As mentioned already, Native American's special trust relationship with the federal government as members of a sovereign nation is not appropriately captured.

Although we do have a small sub-committee within CAICC that works to address data collection for our members and participate in collaborative research external to the community, we do not have the resources to remedy your report. At minimum we would welcome an opportunity to meet with the report writers, pointing them to some data they might not have been aware of and include language where there is no date to highlight how that might be remedied in the future. In fact, this report would be an opportunity to bring attention to the issue in a meaningful way and could provide a framework to propose a concerted effort for our City to improve its data collection relative to its Native American population.

We are aware that there was outreach to the Native American community and that there is some reference to that in the section Historical Reckoning Group. It is our understanding that there was a small focus group held but we see no summation or inclusion of any data collected from that. We also believe that a small focus group could not possibly be a substantive methodology for capturing meaningful vision and direction for a report that will shape the next 10 years for our community.

After CAICC reviewed the report and members voiced their disappointment and concerns we talked through some options to address it. Here are our recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Meet with CAICC leadership and members of its research committee where additional resources like the ones mentioned above might be accessed.
2. Any place in the report that mentions action or focus to lift Black and Latino communities also needs to list Native American.
3. Ensure that either data or an articulate message about the challenges for this community around data exclusion tied to goal #3.
4. Set an explicit strategic goal of improving the City's data collection and usage for the Native American community, in example, increasing civic engagement through a special office of Native American affairs that can assist the Mayor and the City build deeper relationships and help implement goals such as this.



In the spirit of inclusion, resilience and planning for our seventh generation,

Chicago American Indian Collaborative
American Indian Association of Illinois
American Indian Center
California Indian Manpower Consortium
Caroline and Ora Smith Foundation
Chicago Public Schools
D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies
Menominee Community Center of Chicago
Mitchell Museum of the American Indian
Native American Chamber of Commerce Illinois
Native American Educational Services College
Northwestern University
St. Kateri Center of Chicago
Trickster Cultural Center
University of Illinois at Chicago-NASP
Visionary Ventures NFP
Wolf River Consulting Group LLC